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**9. Internationalisation and the growing demand for English in Japanese Higher Education: undertaking doctoral study in English**

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**Abstract**

The globalisation of English has seen an increase in English education and education through English. Universities around the globe, including those in non-anglophone contexts, such as Japan, are part of this trend. Despite having a non-native English speaking staff and student body, many students are now required to undertake their full degrees and postgraduate studies in English. This has implications for the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the academic domain. The study reported here is part of a bigger project funded by The British Council aiming to explore staff and student perceptions of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher

education to reveal important insights into the use of English as an academic lingua franca and the impact of the growth of EMI on teacher identity and teaching practice (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri, 2017). This paper reports on interviews with four PhD students at a university in Japan. The data shows that the fast-changing sociolinguistic landscape of ‘international’ universities, and the very move towards EMI, has numerous implications for pedagogy and for the identity of these students. Although some reservations were expressed, opinion is not totally against EMI.

## **Introduction**

English, the world’s lingua franca has become the “operating system for the global conversation” (British Council 2013: 5). As the dominant language in a variety of domains, there is an ever-increasing demand to acquire proficiency in English. For many, English is a tool for global mobility, a gatekeeper to knowledge, a pre-requisite to career success, and for many nations, it is seen as essential for economic development and modernization. In the academic domain, it has become a “shared (...) language of advanced education” (Brumfit 2004: 166) and in the context of higher education, it has often become synonymous with moves to internationalise. The internationalization of higher education has become a global trend and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) around the globe are promoting internationalization policies. Internationalising the curriculum takes many forms and in non-Anglophone contexts, this has often resulted in both the expansion and introduction of English Medium Instruction (EMI). EMI, defined as “The use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (Dearden 2014: 2), has seen a rapid growth in HEIs across several continents. The most significant increase has been reported in Europe, where the number of EMI programmes grew by more than 1,000 per cent between 2001 and 2014 (Wächter and Maiworm, 2014). This growth has been accompanied by a growth in research on EMI implementation conducted in this context (e.g. Björkman 2010; Costa and Coleman 2013; Dimova, Hultgren and Jensen 2015; Jensen and Thøgersen 2011; Tange 2010). EMI has also been gradually gaining momentum on other continents, including Asia (e.g. Bradford 2016; Brown, 2014; Bryun et al. 2011; Hamid et al. 2013; Tsuneyoshi 2005; Wong 2010). However, compared to other contexts, research investigating the implementation of EMI in this context is still scarce.

The mixed methods study reported in this chapter aimed to investigate 3 academic staff and 3

PhD students' conceptualisations of EMI in a Japanese HEI, as part of a bigger study conducted by Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (2017). The chapter begins by discussing the benefits, and challenges facing the implementation, of EMI in non-Anglophone countries. It then reports on a case study of a Japanese HEI. Japan is a relevant context to investigate this issue as it is a country which not only has a long history of striving to increase the diversity of the student population and compete in domestic and global higher education market, but one which has recently experienced a notable increase in EMI providing HEIs (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017). At the same time, as previously noted, most of the studies on EMI have, to date, been conducted in Europe. Although EMI is, indeed, a growing *global* phenomenon, there is no one-size-fits all approach. Thus, implementing EMI courses and programs should take various contexts into account, as it is not clear whether, and to what extent, the existing research findings from Europe or other contexts may be applied to Japanese Higher Education (HE)(Bradford 2016).

### **Benefits and challenges of EMI in non-Anglophone contexts**

In non-native English speaking contexts, EMI is often seen as a way of improving students' English proficiency and content learning at the same time (e.g. Aguilar and Rodriguez 2012; Wong 2010), critical thinking and cognitive development and, ultimately, enhancing their academic performance and increasing employability (e.g. Chapple 2015). It has also been argued to provide access to cutting-edge knowledge, help generate income from additional, and often higher, tuition fees paid by international students, increasing staff and student mobility, and increasing employability of graduates (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017). The benefits of EMI can be divided into those which benefit the staff and/or students at a more personal level, and those which contribute to national and institutional long-term goals and agendas (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu, Li and Lei 2014). The latter, which are among the main driving forces of implementing the approach in a variety of HEIs worldwide, include increasing the graduates' employability, and the nation's competitiveness, in the global markets, attracting international staff and students to the university, and, thus, raising the universities' international rankings (e.g. Bradford 2016; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu 2007; Kumawura 2009; Wilkinson 2013). At the more personal level, EMI has been reported not only to have positive effects both on students' English acquisition and content learning (e.g. Aguilar and Rodriguez 2012; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Park 2007; Tatzl 2011; Wong 2010), but also to have a variety of other benefits, including

improving cross-cultural understanding and global awareness; (...) fostering creative thinking; enriching and enhancing cognitive skills and emotional development; helping students score higher on standardized tests, and enhancing career opportunities (Chapple 2015: 3)

Among ‘personal benefits’ that Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (2017: 23) discuss are also: better access to international conferences, being able to publish in academic journals, increased access to better jobs, both domestically and abroad and being able to participate in multilingual and multicultural communities.

However, notwithstanding the somewhat idealistic view of EMI emerging from the literature, a number of studies have produced results that not only raise concerns about the effectiveness of the approach for language and content learning, but also reveal a variety of challenges to the successful implementation of EMI. Firstly, the benefits that EMI is expected to have on an individual level have been questioned. The most recurrent challenge emerging from these studies seems to be both staff and students’ insufficient English command in the cases where English is not their mother tongue (e.g. Ball and Lindsay 2013; Beckett and Li 2012; Doiz et al. 2013; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu and Lei 2014; Tange 2010; Wilkinson 2013). In the case of academic faculty, this has been shown to affect both language and disciplinary learning, as the non-native English teachers’ often limited English competence may result in their resorting to the use of their mother tongue or simplifying the course content in English (Hu and Lei 2014; Tange 2010). Teachers’ English competence has also been reported to influence their ability to address students’ needs and provide explanations of difficult concepts (e.g. Hu and Lei 2014; Sert 2008), and influence the delivery of lectures in English (e.g. Thøgersen and Airey 2011). While these findings may be based on a definition of proficiency in adherence with ‘native’ English norms, (self-assessed) English competence may have detrimental effect on the teachers’ self-perceptions and professional identity, as they may often find themselves being “at the interface between institutional demands and students’ expectations” (Tange 2010: 141) and not always able to respond to both. Similarly, English proficiency has also been reported to affect students’ classroom participation, understanding of lectures, ability to effectively study the content and, ultimately, their general attitudes towards EMI, at least in the countries where English is not considered the official or co-official language (e.g. Doiz et al. 2013; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu and Lei 2014; Tsuneyoshi 2005; Webb 2002).

These challenges have been classified as ‘linguistic’ (Bradford 2016: 341) or ‘language-related’ (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017: 24) challenges. Language, however, is only one factor in implementing EMI policy and a number of other ‘challenges’ have been identified in the literature. Bradford (2016), for example, also distinguishes between ‘cultural’ and ‘structural’ challenges (p.342), which Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (2017) refer to as ‘nationality/culture-related’ and ‘institutional/organizational’ challenges (p.24), respectively. The former include possible challenges resulting from differing backgrounds and learning traditions, which may give rise to misconceptions about teaching and learning styles and tutor-student relationships in the classroom. Such differences in beliefs or expectations may influence classroom dynamics, sometimes resulting in negative evaluations of instructors’ teaching skills, and also of the overall effectiveness of EMI (Tange 2010). This mix of lingua-cultural and educational backgrounds may also have a negative effect on the international staff members by invoking a sense of being the outsiders imposing their culture on the students (Bradford 2016). The second group of challenges, ‘structural’ (ibid.) or ‘institutional/organizational’ (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017) challenges, include the issue of students’ English language assessment, teacher training, which often fails to prepare the instructors to teach in such settings, the amount of support provided both to staff and students, and the challenging task of recruiting and retaining suitable teaching staff (Bradford 2016; Chapple 2015; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Tsuneyoshi 2005). These challenges also include insufficient training in intercultural communication and “few pedagogical guidelines [being available] for effective EMI teaching and learning” (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017: 8). Apart from the aforementioned language-related, institutional/organizational, and nationality/culture-related challenges, Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (2017) also discuss ‘Materials-related’ challenges’ which may result from the “[ir]relevance of the content class materials for a given context and [from] the level of English required to study with these materials” (p.26).

Notwithstanding the increasing evidence base of both the challenges and benefits of implementing EMI, these results need to be treated with caution. Firstly, concerns have been raised that implementing EMI is aimed at achieving institutional goals, such as attracting international staff and students to the university, and, thus, raising the universities’ international rankings, at the expense of the quality of content and language learning (Macaro 2015; Tange 2010). Secondly, the very categorization of challenges is debatable. For example, whether the culture-related *aspects* of EMI listed above have to, indeed, be treated as *challenges*, is an issue open for debate (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017). Scholars, who in line with Phillipson

(1992; 2008), support the theory of *linguistic imperialism* and raise concerns about the global spread of English as being the evidence of “Anglo-American hegemony” (Modiano 2001: 339) and the powerful oppressing the weak, are critical of EMI. Concerns have been raised that EMI may pose a threat to the students’ overall sense of their ‘identity’ with regard to their cultural belonging (Shohamy 2013) or them not using, and not being educated through their mother tongue (Smith 2004). In addition, research within the field of Global Englishes has highlighted ambivalence of the very concept of proficiency in English today and the relevance of ‘native’ English norms for those learning English in today’s globalized world (Galloway and Rose 2015; Galloway 2017). The growing body of Global Englishes research showcasing how the language functions as a global lingua franca is providing an increasing body of evidence that English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) use the language in rather different ways to what is taught in the ‘traditional’ classroom. Furthermore, the discussions of the aforementioned language-related challenges which see the teachers’ code-switching, or resorting to their mother tongue in communication with the students, as a sign of insufficient English proficiency (e.g. Hu and Lei 2014; Tange 2010) are also evidence of a monolingual ideology that does not value the valuable use of the speakers’ entire multilingual repertoire to negotiate communication. Whilst this communication strategy, otherwise known as a compensatory strategy, may indeed be adopted to compensate for linguistic limitations, it may also be used by the speaker to cater for his/her interlocutor’s insufficient language command, rather than his/her own (Maleki 2010). Additionally, code-switching may serve the purpose of explaining difficult grammatical items or developing better rapport by creating a sense of solidarity, and has been increasingly seen as an asset, rather than limitation (e.g. Björkman 2014; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Ma 2011). Therefore, the teachers’ use of their mother tongue in the EMI classroom should not be taken as evidence for a lack of proficiency in the language, but may be related to their beliefs about what is necessary, and acceptable, when teaching through the medium of English. More studies are needed within the field of EMI that draw on the increasing body of work within the Global Englishes paradigm that showcases the irrelevance of ‘native’ English speaking norms for both English language learning and teaching and also EMI. Moreover, the existing studies have neither considered nor explored the students’ beliefs about the role of English in the globalized world, their self-positioning as users of the language or, most importantly, their conceptualization of EMI itself. A question remains, therefore, as to what extent the perceived benefits of EMI, for example, “improving cross-cultural understanding”, “enhancing academic progress”, or “helping students score higher on standardized tests” (Chapple 2015: 3), are merely a reflection of beliefs about the superiority of English promoted through education policy, large-scale standardized, etc. Such beliefs may stem from the dominance of English in

the academic domain and, of course, the use of English proficiency to determine academic and career success in many contexts. This was the case in Hu and Lei's (2014) case study of a Chinese university, for example. Interviews with 5 teachers and 10 students revealed that both groups were aware of a number of benefits of EMI, arguing that it offered "better educational opportunities *in the West*" (p.559, emphasis added). Finally, although some studies investigating stakeholders' attitudes towards EMI have been conducted in Japan (Chapple 2015; Jon and Kim 2011; Tange 2010; Tsuneyoshi 2005), research is still scarce compared to empirical evidence gathered from European institutions. There are still "not many studies [that] have focused on the ground-level (mis)alignment between EMI as policy and the actual experiences, and attitudes, of key stakeholders, namely students and faculty" (Hu 2009: 3), particularly in this context.

Although arguments both in favor of, and against EMI, which are outlined in this chapter, have been put forward based on the *initial* findings, they have, arguably, been made prematurely, for it is fair to say that the growth in EMI programs has outpaced research (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017). It is particularly unfortunate that although a growing number of scholars investigating EMI implementation in various contexts engage in discussions of possible benefits and challenges of EMI, surprisingly little attention (although exceptions include, for example, Iino & Murata, 2016) has been given to the *students'* perceptions of this instructional approach (Po-yung Tsui and Ngo 2017). This includes their *conceptualizations* of EMI and their general understanding of the very purpose of having this instructional approach. Since it is not clear how they *define* EMI and what they believe its purposes to be, it is difficult, for example, to interpret the available findings related to their supposedly positive (e.g. Costa and Coleman 2013) attitudes towards it. It is also important to compare staff and students' beliefs about EMI to ensure that both groups are clear about its purposes and, thus, the expectations towards each other. Understanding such individual beliefs may help to maximize the value of EMI for these individuals. An investigation into their experiences, expectations and, possibly, challenges with regard to EMI could form the basis for a needs analysis that would ultimately ensure that the program equally benefits them and the institutions where they are based. It would also help to ensure that both of these groups of stakeholders are clear about the purposes of EMI and their own roles in it.

To sum up, to consider both staff and students' *conceptualizations* of EMI is a crucial prerequisite for investigating its implementation in a given context. It is not possible to interpret the participants' beliefs about benefits and challenges of EMI without getting to know these



subjective perceptions. After all, one's evaluation of the effectiveness of a certain pedagogical tool is strongly based on his/her understanding of what its purpose and intended outcomes are. The study reported on in this chapter was an attempt to address these subjective evaluations of EMI by investigating the participants' conceptualizations of it.

## **Design**

The study reported here forms part of a larger study sponsored by The British Council (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017). The aim was to explore the implementation of, the driving forces behind, and stakeholders' conceptualizations of EMI in China and Japan using questionnaires (579 students at 12 universities, and 28 staff members at eight universities), interviews (28 staff members and 18 students from six universities) and focus groups (4 staff and 4 student focus groups from 4 universities). The study also aimed to reveal insights into the use of ELF in the academic domain and the impact of the growth of EMI on teaching practice, teacher training and the overall student experience. In this chapter, we report on an additional three interviews with three PhD students, not included in the main study, and four academics in one Japanese university to provide some insight into the larger study. We focus on staff and students' conceptualizations of, and experiences with EMI.

The three PhD students were all based in the Graduate School of Education. Although some professors teach their courses in English, this is not an official EMI faculty and, therefore, students had varying degrees of exposure to English. Additionally, while the School requires all English education major MA students to submit their dissertations in English, the PhD students can choose whether they write their thesis in Japanese or English. While the majority of the classes are conducted in Japanese, a limited number of classes are taught in English and use English materials (observed in this study). Three professors were also from this School, where they are not required to do so, but teach some of their classes in English voluntarily. On the other hand, the professor from the Graduate School of International Culture and Communication Studies is required to teach all of his courses in English in principle.

Data was collected at a top-tier private university in Japan. As a Global 30, and subsequently Type A Super Global University, the university is a leading institution in Japan's internationalisation process. There are numerous EMI programmes across the entire university and, in 2009, it was selected to be part of the Japanese Government's Global 30

(MEXT 2009) university project, an initiative that aimed to select 30 universities for internationalization. In the first five-year cycle, 13 top-tier universities were chosen. The goals of the project included expanding programmes taught through the medium of English, increase the number of international students, provide opportunities for international students to learn Japanese and promote international cooperation through the establishment of international offices. This university, however, has long been leading the trend in the internationalisation process, with the first EMI programme being introduced more than two decades ago. However, the Global 30 project, and the subsequent Super-Global project, have provided more funding for internationalisation efforts (MEXT, 2012).

Interviews were conducted by one of the authors in May, 2016 after establishing initial contacts with The School of Education. The school, which prides itself in having provided teacher education training for over a 100 years, at present offers five master's, and two doctoral majors. Although The School of Education is not officially an EMI faculty, some professors do conduct a small number of seminars in English. This university also established one of the first writing support centres in Japan. The aim of the centre is to offer students at all levels guidance and support in relation to academic writing, as well as to enable them to take control of their own development through recognising and correcting problematic areas in their writing.

### *Data analysis procedures*

The interviews were first transcribed and then analyzed with *NVivo 10* to enable the researchers to effectively manage the data by coding and sorting it, and explore it in detail by means of a range of available tests, queries and tools for visualizing various relationships and patterns within the text. Thematic analysis of the participants' responses was conducted separately for students' and teachers' responses which were treated as separate 'cases', constituting a process known as 'within-case analysis' (Bazeley 2013). Within each data set, the participants' responses were coded in order to sort the data and inspect common trends and patterns and, thus, to determine the emerging themes based on the frequency with which given codes occurred. These themes were, then, explored through cross-case comparisons, or cross-tabulating the results of the student and staff interviews. Based on this 'cross-case analysis' (ibid.) the thematic framework discussed in the following section was developed.

## Results

Although the selected students were all doing their PhDs, they mainly talked about their undergraduate experiences with EMI or the experience of *Japanese students* studying in EMI in general. They discussed in brief the driving forces of EMI, which they believed to be linked to academic requirements of presenting at conferences and submitting articles in English, as well as the universities' efforts to internationalize by both sending students abroad and attracting international students.

The dominant themes that emerged during the student interviews were, however, 'benefits of EMI' (mentioned 5 times throughout 2 interviews) and 'challenges of EMI' (mentioned 17 times throughout all three interviews). Although, consistent with some previous findings, the participants expressed awareness of benefits of EMI for themselves and for the university at the theoretical level (e.g. Costa and Coleman 2013; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu and Lei 2014; Tong and Shi 2012), they seemed more concerned about several possible challenges that could hinder the effective implementation of this type of instruction. This was evident in the percentage of data collected from each student participant that was covered by the accounts of practical challenges, as compared to the accounts of positive experiences or benefits related to EMI, as demonstrated in Table 1.1.

<TABLE 1.1 HERE>

The analysis of the interview data related to benefits and challenges of EMI revealed that the participants perceived both in terms of what was labelled 'Personal' and 'External' benefits and challenges. This classification was at the basis of the developed thematic framework presented in Figure 1.1.

<FIGURE 1.1 HERE>

This focus on challenges related to EMI reflected the findings of the broader study which revealed that although the students shared predominantly positive and optimistic attitudes towards EMI and recognized a number of benefits of this instructional approach on a theoretical level, on a practical level they associated EMI implementation with certain issues and problems (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017). Therefore, as this was the main finding of the larger study, the following subsections present and discuss specifically the challenges and benefits of

EMI as indicated by the interviewed students, and complements these findings with the teachers' perspectives.

### *Benefits of EMI*

#### Personal benefits

Personal benefits of EMI in general, as well as of their own situation of doing a PhD in English, that the participants recognized were the benefits for their career enhancement, i.e. the easier access to world's knowledge and the global academic market, by being able to read and write academic journals and participate in international scientific conferences. These perceptions are both in line with the ideal view of EMI, as outlined in the literature, and with the previous findings which suggested that students are aware of the benefits that EMI has to offer (e.g. Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu and Lei 2014).

#### External benefits

The external benefits were those related to the benefits of EMI at the institutional level, namely the benefits for the Japanese universities and education system (Hu 2007; Kumawura 2009; Wilkinson 2013). The students were aware of the universities' goals of both attracting international students and sending their students abroad, as explained by Student A:

The university realizes the importance of English. Students need to increase their English proficiency in all skills. Another reason is studying abroad; both for Japanese students to study abroad and international students coming to Japan. Universities need international students.

Thus, the students were aware of both the benefits that EMI has for their career and how this matches the universities' aims to internationalize at the higher level.

### *Challenges of EMI*

## External Challenges

Based on the combination of their own, past experiences with EMI, their current experiences of writing a PhD thesis in English, and their beliefs about, and knowledge of, the Master's students' experiences, the participants discussed a group of challenges that resembled the challenges previously discussed in the literature (e.g. Bradford 2016; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Tsuneyoshi 2005). The 'external challenges' were related to various institutional and environmental constraints and independent of individual 'agency', or the capacity to control one's situation through conscious and independent decisions and actions (Barker 2005). This type of challenges resembled some issues that both Bradford (2016) and Tsuneyoshi (2005) referred to as either 'cultural' or 'structural' challenges, and Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (2017) as 'Institutional/organisational' and 'Nationality/culture-related' challenges. These included: insufficient language support provided to students by the university ( $n=3$ ), lack of collaboration between content and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers ( $n=2$ ), the teachers' pedagogical and cultural background being at odds with the requirements of the diverse sociolinguistic environment of the EMI program ( $n=2$ ), and large class sizes ( $n=1$ ).

With regard to the additional language support offered by the university, all three student participants raised concerns as to the relevance and sufficiency of the provided support for students' needs. In this case, one student was talking about her own experiences while doing a PhD and the other two seemed to be talking about students in general. Although Student A, who was the most 'satisfied' among them, explained that she could count on her PhD supervisor to help, she expressed concerns about the usefulness of the available writing support center, a support service provided in the university to help those students submitting assignments in English, justifying these doubts with the fact that "some students [later] pay native [English] speakers to correct their papers". Student B also expressed a critical opinion of the writing support center, stating that "the time [there] is limited and it consists of designing the thesis". Similar to Student A, although Student B was not satisfied with the additional linguistic support the university offered, he noted that he could rely on his supervisor who was willing to offer help. These opinions about the additional language support offered to students were in line with findings of the larger study (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri, 2017) which revealed that students were often critical of such support, even though they were not always fully aware of all the available options.

The second ‘external’ challenge, also found in the larger study (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017) was the lack of collaboration between content staff and EAP teachers, which resulted in the students’ feeling that their needs are not sufficiently addressed. The students in the larger study were all undergraduate students and, therefore, comments related to their instructors rather than supervisors. In this study, Student A felt “lucky” to have a PhD supervisor who had both “skills in content and academic writing”, but she was not convinced that other students were offered this kind of ‘relevant’ support. Although not specifying whether she was talking about her graduate or undergraduate classes, or support provided by the writing center, student C believed, that the EAP content was not relevant to students’ needs and noted a lack of collaboration between EAP and content lecturers. She explained:

I do not think the professors are co-operating with the support classes. I feel they should collaborate with each other. The lecturers and supervisors encouraged me to take classes, but they were not linked.

Similarly, one of the content teachers, Professor A who works both in the Graduate School of Education and the School of Education, admitted that the “bridge courses”, or the undergraduate year 1 and 2 compulsory EAP classes offered to all students within the School of Education, were not sufficient for students. However, as she only followed with a statement that “it takes a while”, it was not entirely clear whether she was suggesting that there is a scope for developing, and improving these courses, which had only started in the year the interviews were conducted, or whether it takes a while for students *to* improve their English competence. Earlier in the interview, she did point out that, “outside of school they don’t have a chance to use English (...) their school education was grammar based and it’s difficult for them to change their mindset”, implying a belief that language-related challenges stem from previous education and exposure to and use of the language and are not solely related to university support systems. However, all three lecturers who commented on the available language support agreed that both the institutional and personal support was extensive and tailored to their needs. Professor B did point out, however, that it was a newly established program and “we will have to see” how effective it was going to be, even though “the teachers seem positive”. When talking about this support, the lecturers were referring to courses for undergraduate English majors, which consist of compulsory and optional courses aimed at improving English proficiency. They also referred to additional peer support from experienced students who had studied abroad. The lecturers were also confident that the content teachers in different subject areas are aware of some issues

related to second language acquisition, and Professor A noted that they had had training on this topic. They also help their students in various ways, including assigning them separate writing and presenting tasks to improve their English, or code-switching when difficult content was being discussed.

Additionally, the teachers did not seem to share the students' concerns about the lack of collaboration between the EAP class teachers and content teachers. From the staff interviews it was not clear, however, whether such collaboration existed and, if so, to what extent. When asked about contact with EAP teachers, Professor A responded only: "Yes, I know several faculty members who teach bridge courses" at undergraduate level. It should be pointed out, however, that only one of the professors interviewed, Professor C, worked in an EMI faculty, and supervisions of PhD students in the Graduate School of Education are usually conducted in Japanese. Thus, although they were being asked about the general EMI policy in the university, their own current positions and experience with this may have influenced their comments.

The third group of external challenges that the students reported were those related to the teachers' educational and cultural traditions and background, which did not necessarily match those required by this new sociolinguistic landscape of the internationalized university (e.g. Bradford 2016; Hu and Lei 2014; Tange 2010). These closely resembled the 'cultural challenges' described by both Tsuneyoshi (2005) and Bradford (2016), as well as Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri's (2017) 'nationality/culture-related' challenges. In short, the students ( $n=2$ ) felt that Japanese staff were often not equipped in skills necessary for EMI or for supervising PhD students in English. Student B, for example, expressed concerns that in Japan "most professors [are] over 60 years of age", "only have a Master's degree" and, thus, "do not know much about PhDs". However, he believed that the professors at *his* university "got their PhDs overseas, so they [were] knowledgeable". Student B's statement arguably reflects one of the findings of the larger study, namely that the participants equated a *Western* model of education with an *adequate* model of education, regardless of the context in which it was implemented (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri, 2017). Moreover, Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (*ibid.*) have argued that since the participants seemed to perceive EMI predominantly as an instructional approach aimed at *teaching them English*, as opposed to *teaching through English*, they seemed to assume the superiority of native English speaking teachers over local teachers. Similar to Student B, those participants of the larger study who *did* believe that their Chinese or Japanese teachers were adequately trained, linked this to them having spent time, studying and/or working,

overseas. Student C also referred to Japanese lecturers' inadequate pedagogical skills to conduct classes in English. The problem was not to do with their academic qualifications, but with their teaching style, which was not seen as appropriate for an internationalized classroom. She believed that, unlike in Western countries where "the lecturers conduct lectures interactively, (...) in Japan they only transmit knowledge". She added that they need more instruction on "cultural elements" of teaching in their training, as from her experience, students could not keep up with lecturers who did not give them opportunities to ask questions. It is important to note, however, that these comments refer to undergraduate level EMI, as there are very few lectures at graduate level, and PhD level in particular, at her institution.

Interestingly, the topic of limited interaction between lecturers and students was also raised by one of content teachers, Professor D from the Graduate School of Education. She stated, however, that "Japanese students are quiet and they are unfamiliar with exchanging their opinions", indicating that the lack of interaction in EMI classes may be more related to the students than the teachers. Professor D, who teaches several courses in English, was the only member of staff interviewed who explicitly stated that she found implementing EMI difficult. She noted that it was difficult for students to "change their mindset" from the grammar based instruction they had received prior to entering the university to this new and more interactive approach expected in an EMI course or program. The other two staff members also seemed to recognize potential problems with adapting to the new "interactive classrooms", but they talked about them 'hypothetically' and discussed *staff members* 'in general', rather than *their own* problems. Professor C, from the Graduate School of International Culture and Communication Studies, believed more support was needed for professors to be able to shift from traditional teacher-centered approach to teaching to a more learner-centered teaching style, and Professor B, from the Graduate School of Education, expressed her concern that "being able to speak at conferences [was] different to communicating with students", noting that it was challenging for Japanese teachers to use English to communicate content knowledge. This supports the claims that "there are few pedagogical guidelines for effective EMI teaching and learning" (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri, 2017: 8) and is in line with the 'structural' (Tsuneyoshi 2005) or 'institutional/organisational' (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017) challenges previously discussed in the literature. The lack of trained and qualified staff has also been found in Chapple's (2015) study of EMI implementation. It has been argued, in fact, to be the problem in the majority of contexts where EMI has been implemented (Dearden 2015, Tsuneyoshi 2005). Tsuneyoshi (2005), for example, has argued that "finding faculty who [are] both willing and able to present lectures in English" (p.80) was one of the biggest challenges of implementing



EMI. Whilst the faculty members in this current study were all educated to a doctoral degree in the inner circle higher education institutions, as noted, some felt that they lacked training on how to deliver instruction specifically in EMI contexts.

### Personal challenges

Whilst the external challenges were those not linked to the participants' individual agency, the personal challenges were those precisely resulting from their qualities or abilities. In the case of the interviewed students, the only personal challenge for all three of them was their limited self-assessed English competence, which resembled the previously discussed 'linguistic challenges' in Tsuneyoshi's (2005) taxonomy and the findings from a broad body of previous research into EMI and its challenges (e.g. Chapple 2015; Doiz et al. 2012; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu and Lei 2014). Also all three students talked about their own challenges of *writing* a PhD in English, rather than expressing a generalized view of Japanese students' ability to cope with EMI, and believed that it was difficult and required high level of English proficiency. As previously noted, linguistic challenges that students face in EMI programs are the most frequently found practical challenges of this educational approach (e.g. Ball and Lindsay 2013; Beckett and Li 2012; Doiz et al. 2013; Hu and Lei 2014; Tange 2010; Wilkinson 2013), and have been argued to result in difficulties with understanding lectures and, thus, limited participation in classroom interaction (Webb 2002), problems with time management (Tsuneyoshi 2005), or, ultimately, increased likelihood of dropping out (Selzer and Gibson 2009). It is important to note here, however, that similar problems also apply to students pursuing their PhD's in inner circle countries (Jenkins, this volume) and, thus, should not be viewed as applicable exclusively to EMI contexts (Murata & Iino 2018).

### Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this current study was to gain insights into the students' conceptualizations of, and experiences with EMI. The focus was specifically on *PhD* students from one HEI reported in the larger study (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017) in order to address the gap in research devoted to this group of students' experiences with EMI. The study also responded to the lack of research taking stakeholders' (i.e. staff and students) conceptualizations of EMI into consideration (although exceptions include Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017 and Po-

Yung Tsui and Ngo 2017). Thus, although the existing studies provided important insights into these stakeholders' experiences with EMI, their attitudes were not always straightforward to interpret due to lack of clarity regarding their understanding of what EMI is and what purposes it aims to serve. Finally, to date, there has been little research *comparing* staff and students' attitudes towards, and beliefs about EMI, within one specific institution (although exceptions include Botha 2013).

The results both supported previous findings from the existing literature on the topic and brought attention to previously under-researched issues. Firstly, the interview data confirmed that students tend to be aware of the various benefits and driving forces of EMI (Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Hu and Lei 2014). They realized the universities' motivations for introducing EMI, understood how this instructional approach may benefit the universities and the country in the long run, and had a clear vision of their own role in this process by recognizing that a prerequisite for achieving these long term goals was their own professional success stemming from access to the globalized academic and professional market (Wilkinson 2013). Thus, the participants generally held positive attitudes towards EMI (Costa and Coleman 2013; Tong and Shi 2012). Secondly, this study confirmed many of the previously reported challenges to EMI (e.g. Bradford 2016; Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017; Tsuneyoshi 2005), including those related to perceived English language difficulties, to staff and students' cultural and pedagogical background, or to the organization and management of the course. The findings also shed a new light on the notion of structural challenges which remains to be both one of the most problematic and the least researched issues related to EMI (with some notable exceptions including Bradford 2016; Chapple 2015; Hu and Lei 2014). As Chapple (*ibid.*) argues, implementing EMI is a complex and demanding process that requires a great deal of attention and needs to be skillfully incorporated into the way a given institution functions to be its integral part, as opposed to being merely an "add-on" (p.8). From the available secondary data (i.e. the information on the University's website), as well as from some of the collected data, it was evident that this University does offer a range of courses aimed at supporting its students in EMI, particularly at undergraduate level, and considering that not all HEIs have such an extensive support program (which was evident in Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri 2017), the options at this university in fact appear impressive. However, the data suggests that the problem was not in a number, or lack of additional support classes, but in their content and how relevant to the students' needs it was. The students expressed their concerns about the effectiveness and relevance of these classes and commented on the discrepancy between the language used and needed in the lectures and in the content of the support courses. As

previously noted on several occasions, the majority of the staff and students' accounts were referring to undergraduate courses, as opposed to doing a PhD in English. Although it is not possible to make generalizations on the basis of this relatively small sample, based on the results of the larger study, Galloway, Kriukow and Numajiri (2017) made the same suggestions, which indicates that this is an issue to consider in future studies.

Another issue that emerged was the important role of the very conceptualizations of EMI that the study aimed to investigate, and a number of separate beliefs constituting these conceptualizations. These included the participants' general beliefs about what EMI is, what it encompasses, as well as who and how should deliver the content knowledge in EMI courses. These beliefs differed between staff and students interviewed in this study. When speaking about cultural challenges, for example, it was evident that the classroom dynamic was at risk because of these differing views; whilst teachers believed that "Japanese students are quiet and (...) unfamiliar with exchanging their opinions", the students believed that it was the lecturers' responsibility to "encourage students to ask questions" and that it was the lecturers who lacked skills to "conduct lectures interactively" and to successfully deliver content knowledge in a suitable way for an internationalized classrooms. Such seemingly small differences in views may in fact heavily affect classroom dynamics, as well as the students' perceptions of the teachers' teaching ability and, as a result, of the effectiveness of a given EMI course in general. Regarding the question of who should teach such courses, it was evident that the students perceived Japanese lecturers as less skilled than their 'Western' counterparts. This belief was implicitly communicated in statements such as Student A's *positive* comment regarding her Japanese professors, whom she believed to be more competent *because of the fact that they had been educated overseas*. This confirms that, at least to some extent, there exist some views that the Western teaching traditions are intrinsically 'better' and, arguably, that native English speaking teachers are more qualified to teach. It is also noteworthy that whilst both the students of this study and some literature discussed earlier in this chapter attribute communication strategies such as code-switching or paraphrasing to non-native teachers' insufficient command of English and, thus, their inability to deliver content knowledge in English (e.g. Hu and Lei 2014; Sert 2008)(but see Cogo 2012 for a discussion of strategic use of code-switching), the teachers in this current study mentioned using these strategies to *assist students* with understanding difficult concepts. The use of the students' L1 does not equate to a lack of English proficiency, and this study highlights that the strategic use of the students' language is often to assist them to comprehend the subject matter.

Needless to say, these differing conceptualizations of EMI (cf. Murata & Iino 2018) and what it should encompass may prove very problematic for both staff and students, and may ultimately hinder the higher level, institutional or national, goals related to the internationalization of higher education. The differences in viewing the teachers' role in the classroom, or misinterpreting their efforts to aid the students' understanding as a sign of their limited English competence or teaching ability, for example, may influence students' evaluations of the overall quality of a given course and, ultimately, their decision to drop out. It may also influence students' learning, as students' 'trust' and accept feedback from those perceived as knowledgeable and competent in a given domain (Mercer 2011). These differing conceptualizations of EMI may also result in the instructors' feelings of anxiety and stress, affect their self-confidence and, as a result their general self-image and a sense of professional identity (Tange 2010). Teachers, constantly finding themselves in between the students' expectations and the institution's requirements, are arguably "the group of university employees most deeply affected by internationalization" (Tange 2010: 141). Thus, it is equally important to ensure both the students' and the teachers' well-being, and to address this issue in future research.

This study concludes that more dialogue is needed among the stakeholders (i.e. staff and students) of EMI providing HEIs, in order to ensure that the conceptualizations of EMI across these stakeholders are clear and consistent with each other. As the findings have demonstrated, the lack of understanding both between students and teachers, as well as between the content teachers and the English language teachers, may have a negative effect on the overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the course, including the evaluation of the course instructors' teaching ability. It is surprising that although understanding these various conceptualizations is arguably one of the most crucial prerequisites in order to successfully deliver, or more accurately evaluate the effectiveness of a given EMI program by ensuring the validity of the participants' responses, this topic has been widely overlooked and under-estimated in the literature. We conclude with a call for more research.

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